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Senate Dems Push for Vote on Drug Immunity to Protect Victims of Dangerous Drugs

Senate Republicans again fail to protect Michigan citizens from drug companies

LANSING- Senate Democrats today continued to fight for Michigan victims of harmful prescription drugs as they moved to take up the House-passed legislation to end drug immunity for companies whose products kill or injure patients. Victims looked on from the gallery and were forced to wait even longer for justice as Senate Republicans continued to stonewall the effort to repeal the law.

"We should be leading the country in consumer protection, not voting against it," said Sen. Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing). "By failing to support this legislation, Senate Republicans are taking away a basic human right and ultimately telling Michigan victims that they are second-class citizens who don't deserve justice when they or their loved ones are harmed or killed by the misconduct of drug companies."

The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld a victim's right to pursue damages from the manufacturers of a dangerous and defective pharmaceutical product. The Michigan House of Representatives has passed a package of legislation that would afford Michigan residents the same legal recourse when they or their family members are harmed or killed by a faulty prescription drug. Similar bills passed the House last session but were blocked by Senate Republicans, who have also failed to act on ongoing efforts by Senate Democrats to repeal Michigan's drug immunity law, including Senate Bill 19, the Senate's version of such legislation that is currently before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"The doctors and lawyers in the Majority who continue to oppose this common sense reform are betraying the people they swore an oath to protect," said Sen. John J. Gleason (D-Flushing), sponsor of Senate Bill 19. "It's too bad that the Republican Party that loves to trot out family values doesn't believe that justice and safety are among them. By passing this legislation we can hold drug companies accountable for the lives they have harmed and give our victims the right to protect themselves and their families."

Michigan is the only state in the nation that shields big drug companies that make and sell harmful products from giving legal recourse to victims and their families. Michigan's drug immunity law affects victims of all defective and dangerous prescription drugs, including Vioxx, Celebrex, Rezulin and Fen Phen as well as the potential risks of new drugs not even on the market yet.

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